

A LOOK BACK & LOOKING AHEAD

2021 IN REVIEW & PREDICTIONS FOR THE DIGITAL SPACE IN 2022

With 2021 behind us, we're taking a look at some of the major highlights from 2021 in trends, new developments, and bold frontiers in digital. As many businesses continue to evolve their digital ecosystem, this past year marked several key moments and milestones that are changing the digital landscape permanently. For brands that want to ensure longevity over the long term, 2022 will prove to be another pivotal year to stay relevant.



2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

BIGGEST TRENDS

The Evolution of E-commerce: Social media has taken e-commerce by surprise. Brands turned to platforms like Instagram to set up a quickly accessible storefront on their brand pages. Doing this allows users to go from discovery to purchase without leaving their preferred platform. Retail brands should look into shoppable posts on social channels (i.e., Instagram) if they haven't already. To ensure brand longevity, brands and companies must be willing to make changes to their business models as the world around us evolves.

The Rise of "Content Atomization": We started to see more companies breaking down long-form content (white papers, etc.) into more simplified, focused pieces that their consumers can understand better. By doing this, companies have taken steps to extend their relationship with their customer base by starting to break down the corporate barrier and become more accessible to current and prospective consumers.

Pandemic-Induced Digital Transformation:

We continued to see the pandemic-induced digital transformation of late 2020 ramp up throughout 2021, with new platforms and mediums drifting into and out of the spotlight faster than ever — and it doesn't look like it'll stop any time soon. The digital landscape is ever-changing, and at a rapid pace; brands need to take the initiative to become more digitally friendly and accessible to consumers through various digital mediums.

BIGGEST SURPRISES

Digital Marketing: After some serious backlash, Google postponed their culling of third-party cookies to 2023. This will change how advertisements are configured on webpages and will now prioritize web visitors' safety and privacy.

Shifts in Email Consumption: People are engaging with marketing emails more than ever, despite a huge rise in saturation. Email marketing teams have been more attentive to how customers consume content and have applied their learning to tailor email content that will drive sales and engagement.

Voice-Activated SEO: Voice search via smart assistants like the Echo or Siri continues to become more popular among smart device users. Brands should consider writing content that aligns with how people would ask their virtual assistant a question — doing so will help them get the top spot when returning results from the web.



2022 TREND PREDICTIONS

CONTINUING TRENDS

Mobile: Everything is headed towards being more mobile friendly. For brands, it needs to be the #1 consideration for any digital content. Up to 70% of web traffic comes from mobile devices, and it's only continuing to increase. As we continue in the digital era, mobile-friendly integrations to marketing campaigns should continue to be a main focus.

Virtual Events: By and large, virtual events are showing a higher ROI than traditional events, and this means that they likely aren't going away any time soon. Virtual events allow brands to expand their global footprint — getting in front of non-traditional customers and reaching new demographics will help build brand longevity.

SAY GOODBYE TO

Single-Purpose Services: All-in-one services, like HubSpot, Adobe Creative Cloud, Office 365, etc. are dominating the service landscape. Companies have been steadily migrating into unified platforms since the pandemic to create an easier, single hub for employees, streamlining productivity, and ensuring their businesses are staying up to trends with on how to operate while working from home.

ON THE HORIZON

AR/VR Content: We will continue to see a rise in augmented and virtual reality content. Already, consumers are starting to see the technology become more accessible for the everyday user, and the advancements that tech companies are making are happening at a rapid pace. Within the next year, we can expect new ways to consume content.

Data Privacy: The question at hand is whether users will allow companies to share their data. The Apple vs. Epic lawsuit opened the gate for apps taking third-party payments on iOS, circumventing Apple's cut. For many, the issue comes down to if users will want to open up an external site and fill in their payment info versus using their Apple wallet. How a tech giant like Apple plans to pivot remains to be seen.

